

Asbestos In Homes

Asbestos is a name given to a group of naturally occurring fibrous minerals including chrysotile, amosite, crocidolite, anthophyllite, actinolite, and tremolite. Asbestos fibers have been used in a variety of products for purposes of reinforcement, heat and cold insulation, friction, fire protection, sound dampening, decoration, texturing, chemical resistance, and other applications. Over 3500 different products were made with asbestos. Typically, asbestos is found in pipe insulation, boiler insulation, tank insulation, duct insulation, fireproofing, wall and ceiling texture, plaster, wallboard, wallboard joint tape, wallboard mud, floor tile, linoleum, adhesives, ceiling tiles, roofing products, cement asbestos pipe, cement asbestos siding, attic insulation, and other products and materials. Products or materials that contain asbestos are defined as asbestos-containing materials (ACM). In America, asbestos was used in a variety of products and materials from the late 1800s to the present. Contrary to popular belief, asbestos is not currently banned from use in certain products such as floor tile, cement products, roofing products, gaskets, clutch and brake assemblies, etc. Prior to purchasing products or materials determine whether asbestos is present. Exposure to asbestos causes asbestos-related illnesses such as asbestosis, mesothelioma, lung cancer and other lung abnormalities. Generally speaking, asbestos-related illnesses do not show up for many years.

The State of Montana regulates asbestos abatement activities in buildings where three (3) or more linear or square feet of friable or potentially friable ACM are abated. Asbestos abatement means the removal, encapsulation, enclosure, repair, renovation, demolition, placement, transportation, and/or disposal of friable ACM or ACM that may become friable. Friability is a term used to measure how easy it is to crumble ACM and cause asbestos fibers to be released. Friable ACM or non-friable ACM that has become friable are considered regulated ACMs. Asbestos abatement projects require abatement permits, the use of trained and accredited asbestos personnel, proper abatement control measures, and testing.

Asbestos Inspection

Asbestos might be present in many products and materials about the home. Ordinarily, this presents no problem as long as the ACM is in good condition and is not disturbed. Before you remodel your home, conduct repairs, or perform demolition activities, you should determine whether the materials that are going to be impacted contain asbestos. Determining whether a material contains asbestos is done by collecting samples of materials and having a laboratory test the sampled materials for asbestos. Laboratory sample analysis costs roughly \$15-\$30 per sample. Homeowners can collect their own samples of suspect asbestos-containing materials; however, if you are not comfortable sampling building materials, you can hire an asbestos inspector/consultant. A list of asbestos consultants, contractors, and laboratories is available from the Asbestos Control Program.

The State of Montana has a specific homeowner asbestos exclusion rule (ARM 17.74.303, Exclusions), which applies to private homeowners conducting home asbestos abatement projects. The following is the Exclusion Rule:

ARM 17.74.303 EXCLUSIONS

(1) A private homeowner conducting, on his own, an asbestos abatement project in his/her private residence where the sole use of such residence is as the homeowner's domicile, is not subject to the provisions of this subchapter during the period that asbestos-containing material is

present on the homeowner's private property and the homeowner controls or maintains the asbestos-containing material.

(2) A private homeowner as described in (1) of this rule is subject to state and federal requirements for proper packaging, transport, and delivery to an approved asbestos disposal facility of asbestos containing material.

(3) A private homeowner as described in (1) of this rule must use an accredited asbestos abatement worker or an accredited asbestos abatement contractor or accredited asbestos abatement supervisor to perform the transportation and disposal operations described in (2) of this rule.

(4) A private homeowner as described in (1) of this rule must obtain an asbestos abatement project permit from the department for transportation and disposal operations as described in (2) of this rule.

Take note that the Exclusion Rule does not discuss an asbestos inspection requirement. Needless to say, inspecting for asbestos prior to demolition, renovation, or remodeling activities is a very good idea. Knowing which products or materials contain asbestos before you start work will help you determine whether you are initiating an asbestos abatement project. It will tell you whether you need to hire an accredited asbestos contractor to transport or dispose of asbestos waste. Furthermore, identifying whether building materials contain asbestos will characterize the waste materials for transport and disposal purposes. The waste transporter, transfer station, or landfill need to know whether waste materials contain asbestos for proper handling procedures and employee safety. Needless to say, knowing whether a material contains asbestos will help prevent contaminating your house with asbestos. Again, if you impact 3 or more linear or square feet of regulated ACM, the transportation and disposal of asbestos waste from your house is regulated.

Contractors Working In Homes

The Exclusion rule only applies to homeowners. Contractors who conduct demolition, renovation, remodeling, or asbestos abatement activities in a home, are obligated to follow OSHA regulations and other applicable regulations. According to OSHA, the contractor must exercise due diligence by inspecting for asbestos to determine whether materials that will be impacted contain asbestos. OSHA requires inspecting for asbestos as part of its hazard communication rules found in 29 CFR 1926.1101. If asbestos waste is generated by demolition, renovation, remodeling or abatement activities, asbestos waste transportation and disposal are regulated by DEQ as described above. The waste transporter, transfer station, or landfill which will receive the asbestos waste should also be contacted for any special waste packaging and handling requirements.

Many people mistakenly think that if asbestos-containing materials are found they must be removed. In many cases, remodeling can occur without disturbing ACM. Consider all abatement options before jumping into removal. The State of Montana's Asbestos Control Program provides asbestos compliance assistance. The Program maintains lists of asbestos consultants, contractors, labs, and accredited asbestos personnel for your reference. The Program can be reached at (406) 444-5300 or by visiting our website at www.asbestos.mt.gov.

EPA's website contains a large amount of asbestos and vermiculite information. Although EPA generally does not regulate asbestos in homes, asbestos information can be accessed by visiting www.epa.gov/asbestos/ or calling EPA's Asbestos Hotline at 1-800-368-5888.

OSHA's website is www.osha.gov/SLTC/asbestos/ OSHA can be contacted at 1-800-321-6742 or in Billings at (406) 247-7494.